

OUT OF TIME

Issue No. 56

Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

Marh 2001

WELCOME HOME LINDA AND SUSAN!!!



Susan Rosenberg



Photo: Jane Cleland

Linda Evens and her mom Rachel

An outpouring of emotion from family, friends and supporters greeted political prisoners Linda Evans and Susan Rosenberg, following their release from prison after 16 years. (Linda released in the San Francisco Bay Area, Susan in the New York Metropolitan Area.) In virtually the last minutes of his presidency, Bill Clinton commuted their sentences on January 20; the two were released the next day. Rosenberg was arrested in 1985 on weapons and conspiracy charges, but was held past her sentence for charges on which she had never been tried. Evans served 10 times the average sentence for the weapons charges for which she was convicted. At release parties on both coasts, tears, laughter, hugs abounded— as well as passionate statements about continuing the struggle to free all political prisoners.

Message from Susan for Linda's Release Party:

My dear Linda – it is unbelievable that we are free. A profound gift, no? Yes! Everyday I wake up and my first thought is "this isn't prison, wow." I am told that eventually this feeling goes away, but I am sure that there will always be an element of this absolute wonderment. I know that both you and I will continue to live with the commitments that have

always defined us and that while it is more complex out there in the new world, it is also more beautiful. And I know that it is this beauty of freedom that will help all of us reenergize to develop new and creative ways to support and love those that we left behind. My very best to you and to everyone who is there, who helped make this possible. Love and Peace — SR

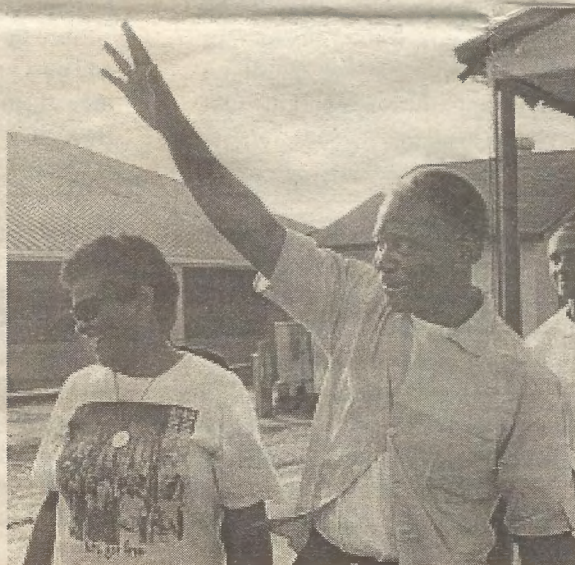


Photo: Diane Nelson

Linda and Susan D.C. Jail 1989

Angola 3 Defendant - Robert King Wilkerson Released

Robert King Wilkerson, one of the prisoners known as "the Angola 3," was released from Louisiana State Penitentiary February 8 after spending twenty-nine years in solitary confinement for a murder he did not commit.



Wilkerson, 57, was convicted of the 1973 murder of a fellow Angola prisoner despite the fact that another man confessed and was convicted of the murder. Wilkerson has pledged to dedicate his life to winning freedom for Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, the other two members of the Angola 3, and for all of the other innocent men with whom he was incarcerated for the past three decades.

Wilkerson, Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace have always believed that they were framed by prison officials because they organized the Angola chapter of the Black Panther Party. Prior to being placed in solitary confinement, the men led campaigns to end prisoner rape, improve race relations, and ameliorate conditions at the slave plantation-turned-prison. Wilkerson: "I may be free of Angola, but Angola will never be free of me."

For more information contact Marina Drummer, National Coalition to Free the Angola 3, (510) 655-8770.

National Coalition to Free the Angola Three
P.O. Box 221100
Sacramento, CA 95822

www.prisonactivist.org/angola <<http://www.prisonactivist.org/angola>>

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Trial Updates

LORI BERENSON is a US citizen currently being held as a political prisoner in Lima, Peru.

On August 28, after serving nearly five years in harsh Peruvian jails high in the Andes, her conviction of treason against Peru and her life sentence were nullified because the Peruvian government admitted it erred in charging her with leadership in a terrorist group. However on January 15, Peruvian Prosecutor Maria Peralta reinstated charges against Lori, this time stated as "collaboration" rather than "leadership" with the rebels. Although she is permitted to have a lawyer hear testimony taken from witnesses, the testimony was begun before she had even hired a lawyer. The new trial exposes her to double jeopardy in violation of Peruvian law and international treaties signed by Peru.

Write to Lori: c/o The Committee to Free Lori Berenson
320 e. 25th Street #2AA, New York, NY 10010
Letters must be in Spanish to pass the prison censors.
For ongoing information, <http://freelori.org>.

EDDIE HATCHER'S murder trial is scheduled to begin in early April 2001. Hatcher is a Gay Native American HIV Positive Political Prisoner known around the world for his takeover of a local newspaper to bring attention to corruption in Robeson County, North Carolina. He exposed and opposed Jesse Helms continually for years and was even considering running for local office before his arrest.

On February 13, a state health official came to talk to Eddie asserting that an unnamed individual who had recently tested HIV + claimed he had contracted this thru contact with Eddie. The health official asked Eddie to sign a legal document for people newly informed of their HIV status. Eddie responded that his HIV+ status has been highly reported in all the local media for the past 5 years and refused to sign the document. Now Eddie is being held in isolation pending an investigation into an alleged incident of misconduct about which he has no information,

check the website @ www.eddiehatcher.org <<http://www.eddiehatcher.org>>

SARA JANE OLSON (Kathleen Soliah) was arrested in the summer of 1999. It was generally agreed that 25 years after the incidents in question, the case against her was weak at very best. Olson was charged with conspiracy to plant pipe bombs under LAPD car in 1975. However, following the Clinton pardon of Patty Hearst, in pre-trial motions on January 23, Judge Larry Paul Fidler agreed to allow the entire history of the SLA as evidence in her trial. Olson's trial is scheduled to begin on April 30 in Los Angeles. For more information - contact Sara Olson Defense Fund committee, PO box 300123, Minneapolis, MN 55403: 612 822 1637; 222 saraolsondefense.org.

IMAM JAMIL AL-AMIN (formerly H. Rap Brown) pleaded innocent to murder charges on January 19, in Atlanta. Trial is expected to begin in October. Al-Amin has been an Iman in the West End of Atlanta for the last 29 years. A life-long activist, he has been involved in anti-drug and prostitution work.

For more information, contact:
(770)521-5386 ImamJamil@hotmail.com

Out Of Control Without Blue and Julie?



Hard to believe, but it's true. Blue and Julie bought an R.V. dubbed the *Delta Flyer* (Star Trek space shuttle) and have taken off for cross-country adventures. They are and will continue to be sorely missed. Blue has been primarily responsible for the layout of *Out Of Time* and Julie did just about everything else to keep Out Of Control operating (correspondence, money management, etc...) But we're picking up the pieces and expect them back some day. We had a great send-off party for them on February 3rd. Guests of honor included Linda Evans, Luis Rosa (recently released Puerto Rican Independentista) and Rafael Cancel Miranda. In fact Luis, stopped by in the middle of a whirl wind trip to the Bay Area specifically to personally thank us Out Of Control dykes for our work. We were honored. Anyway... we hope Blue and Julie have a blast.



Excerpts From Statement by Leonard Peltier

January 29, 2001

Greetings Friends and Supporters:

January 20, 2001, was a sad day for all of us. I know that this denial of clemency has affected many of you as much as it has affected both my family and myself. It is a terrible feeling and disappointment knowing that this nightmare has not ended and will continue for many months to come.

When I received the news, I felt my stomach curl and a feeling of nausea rolled over me. It took a while for me to refocus. For some reason I had thought I might be having dinner with my family that night. It was an especially disappointing day for all of us.

The LPDC bought me clothes, my grandson prepared his bedroom for me to sleep in and other preparations were made for my homecoming. My friends on Pine Ridge began plans to build me a house. We were literally forced to get our hopes up because we did not want to be unprepared if I was suddenly set free.

Since that dark Saturday, I have managed to get up and dust myself off, and begin to lift my spirits once more. I am just as determined now to fight for my freedom as I was on February 6, 1976 when I was first arrested. I will not give up.

We now have a number of strategies to continue this struggle for my freedom. These ideas are in the early planning stages. I ask you to remain with us while we regroup and develop a thorough plan. We must carefully consider every option and make sure the strategies compliment each other in order to have the best effect. The LPDC will release strategies as they are developed.

In closing, I want to thank you again for your support and ask that you stand with us in this struggle. I believe that one day in the near future we will succeed. But it can't be done without your support.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse, Leonard Peltier

MARCH EVENTS IN BAY AREA

Wednesday, March 21, 7:30 pm, La Pena Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley, The Jericho Amnesty Movement 2001 Film Series presents "OUT the Making of a Revolutionary" the story of former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn's life told in the framework of the liberation and justice movements of the 60's & 70's. Discussion with recently released political prisoner Linda Evans. 510.433.0115

Saturday March 24, 7:30 pm, Celebrate Women Prisoners Who Fight Back, featuring Gwen Avery, powerhouse blues and soul and Copper Wimmin, fearless a capella plus folk diva Eileen Hazel. With recently released political prisoner Linda Evans and testimony from former prisoners and family members. San Francisco Women's Building, 3543 18th St. \$10-20 (no one turned away). Wheelchair accessible. Childcare Provided. A benefit for the California Coalition for Women Prisoners. For more info call 415-255-7036 ext. 4 California Coalition for Women Prisoners 100 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102 415-255-7036 ext. 4

International Women's Day

March 8, 1857: women garment workers in NYC demonstrated against inhumane working conditions and low wages. The police attacked and dispersed the protesters.

March 8, 1908: 15,000 women marched through NYC demanding shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights and an end to child labor.

March 25, 1911: the Triangle Fire in NYC killed 140 young immigrant women working in a shirt waist factory.

March 8, 2001: In honor of IWD, we dedicate this issue of *Out of Time* to women who risk their lives fighting for human rights, and the many who have died working in dangerous and inhumane conditions. We remember women political prisoners and Prisoners of War, inside and out, who fight courageously for self-determination of all peoples and against a system based on greed, colonialism and exploitation. We can't forget our sisters in prison for self defense and "crimes" of poverty, especially those currently fighting for their lives at Chowchilla.

OUT OF TIME

Greetings From Susan Rosenberg



Freedom is wonderful and incredible, and I thank everyone for the efforts of solidarity over all these years. If mine and Linda's release inspires hope, hopefully that hope will reenergize us to work for the freedom of all those locked up. Peace, Susan.

Interview with Linda Evans

OOC: Tell us about adjusting to life on the outside; after 16 years in prison, what is most startling and striking about being out?

Linda: The hardest part of adjusting to life outside has been the pain, suffering, poverty and homelessness I see everywhere on the streets... The gap I see between people who have anything and people who have nothing is wider than it ever has been before...

It's amazing to walk the streets of San Francisco - a city that seems so accepting of lesbians and gay men - and still feel and see such intense suffering. I know I'm extra-sensitive to all of this because I was in such a regimented environment for so long.



Photo: Scott Braley

OOC: I know this is a hard question, but politically, what does this mean to you now?

Linda: The conditions that motivated us to become revolutionaries have worsened so intensely that I feel assaulted by pain as I walk down the streets. I understand that people become accustomed to witnessing this level of suffering, that it's hard to figure out the solutions to global problems like homelessness and refugees. But I think it's really important for us to de-sensitize ourselves to some extent and to identify with the problems of the most oppressed people in our society and in the world. We need to pose the question, "What kind of world do we want to live in? What kind of world do we want for our children?" And then dig in and work to achieve it.

OOC: In prison you studied and wrote a great deal politically. You also became an accomplished artist/quilter. What led you to get involved with quilting?

Linda: My desire to create quilts originated in wanting to give people presents that could be of use in their lives, to keep my friends warm and to give them a gift of beauty. We weren't able to show our gratitude in many ways, for the support of people outside, so creating quilts, eyeglass cases, quilted cards was a way of giving gifts, a way of showing love. My first quilt was a gift for my dear comrade Laura Whitehorn, which I worked on one winter when she was ill - a healing quilt.

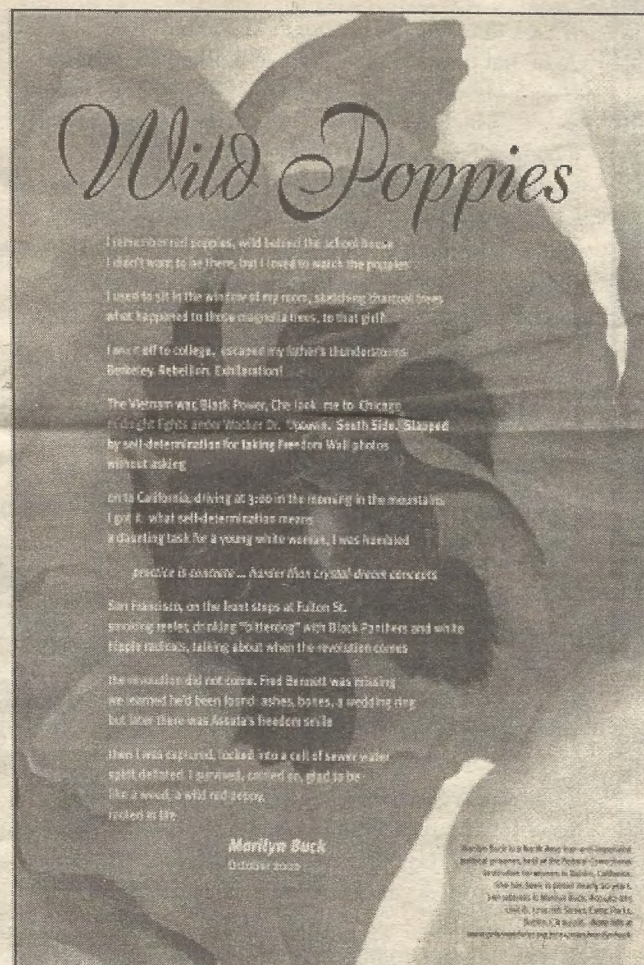
OOC: I've seen many of your quilts: the colors are magnificent, vibrant. Can you talk about that?

Linda: As regulations in the prison tightened, they stripped us of street clothes - and thereby stripped us of color as well. So for me quilting was also a response to color deprivation, a way to create a feast of color for my eyes in an extremely bleak and colorless environment. I remember when we were first required to dress in the khaki uniforms - looking out at the lines of women waiting outside the dining room was like a sea of khaki. The prison's effort was to rob us of our individuality, which of course didn't work. But we were forced to live in a very monochromatic environment - khaki, gray and white were the dominant colors we experienced day in and day out.

OOC: To be able to produce such beautiful art - that must have been very emotional...

Linda: Producing quilts was also a way of controlling something from beginning to end, in a place where we had little control over any aspect of our lives. Despite clear obstacles, like limited access to different fabrics, threads, etc. the boundaries of my creativity were limited only by the development of my own skills. So I had challenges in the midst of the mental and creative stagnation that the prison environment tries to enforce. Also, quilting felt productive - a way to create something tangible, beautiful, useful - a way to actually finish and accomplish a project.

Marilyn Buck's Art Published



OOC: How did your artistic impulses relate to your political activism?

Linda: I enjoyed the fact that quilting is dominantly a women's art. I felt part of a historical process that includes quilts made out of scraps by slave women to keep their children warm, and quilts made out of old clothes by pioneer women.

I was able to create some quilts with an overt political message and others for specific political purposes. Some of my quilts have been raffled as fund-raisers for Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense and for the campaign to free the Puerto Rican POWs. The process of combining artistic and political expression and purpose is exciting and challenging, especially in a medium where the "message" is visual and tactile rather than verbal.

RESCUE THE WORD



Poems - Marilyn Buck

Announcing the publication of Marilyn Buck's first chapbook, Rescue the Word, with drawings by Marilyn, Miranda Bergman, and Jane Norling. Rescue the Word can be ordered from Friends of Marilyn Buck. Copies are \$5.00 each (plus \$5.00 for postage and handling for every order of 1-5). A beautiful four-color 11x17 poster of Marilyn's poem Wild Poppies, is also available for \$5.00, (plus \$5.00 for postage and handling for every order 1-10). Checks should be made out to LSPC/MBJ and sent with order information to:

Friends of Marilyn Buck
c/o Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
100 McAllister St., 2nd floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
Also please send along any information on contacts who might review the chapbook. Check out:
www.prisonactivist.org/pps+pows/marilynbuck

NINE DEATHS SINCE NOVEMBER 9

The Central California Women's Facility Has Become A Death House

Since November 9, nine women prisoners have died at the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF). At least three of the women were HIV+, and at least one was also co-infected with Hepatitis C. Two of the women died at Madera Community Hospital after long and serious illnesses.

However, all women shared one thing in common: they were incarcerated at CCWF, the prison that is notorious for its substandard medical care. And it is very clear that each woman had her life shortened due to callous and inhumane treatment by correctional and medical staff.

The California Department of Corrections (CDC) wants to blame these dead women. They have floated a news story that women "may" have died from mixing their prescription drugs with illegal drugs. It must be the women's fault. It can't be the result of daily medical neglect. Or can it?

CCWF was the recent subject of a class action lawsuit (Shumate v. Wilson) challenging medical neglect and abuse of chronically ill women. On October 11-12, 2000, state legislative hearings conducted by Senator Richard Polanco's Joint Committee on Prison Construction and Operations were held inside two women's prisons. The poor medical standard of care received by women prisoners at CCWF was criticized by many prisoners and outside advocates.



Drawing by Bernard Patrick, Georgia State Prison

Flash: Susan Crane, longtime Plowshares activist released from FCIDublin last year is now back inside serving a 12 month sentence on the east coast for a probation violation. Her crime: associating with other Plowshares activists.

HELP STOP THE DEATHS! FAX, PHONE OR WRITE!

A coalition of advocacy groups is calling upon Senator Polanco to conduct an independent investigation into these deaths. We cannot allow the CDC to "investigate" itself and cover up this latest human tragedy. We are demanding that legislators step in and address this issue, but WE CAN'T LET THE CDC OFF THE HOOK either! Please send a version of the sample letter below to the head of CDC medical staff:

Dr. Susann Steinberg, Deputy Director
CDC Health Care Services Division
P.O. Box 942883, Sacramento, CA 94283
Phone: (916) 323-0229; Fax: (916) 327-0593

Dear Dr. Steinberg:

Stop the murder of women prisoners at the Central California Women's Facility! You are ultimately responsible for preventing these unnecessary deaths and are clearly not doing your job. Nine deaths since November 9 are a crime and a human tragedy. These deaths are the result of medical neglect not illegal drug use by the women. We demand that you take all measures to stop the death toll immediately. We also demand that outside doctors be brought in to examine all seriously ill women and that they be referred immediately to appropriate medical services so as to avoid any further deaths.

Flyer issued by HIV in Prison Committee, California Prison Focus: (510) 665-1935 www.prisons.org/hivin.htm

Oklahoma Lesbian Executed

First Woman Since 1903

Excerpts from Statement of Joann Bell, Oklahoma ACLU Executive Director, On the Execution of Wanda Jean Allen, January 11, 2001

It took the State of Oklahoma 21 minutes to kill Wanda Jean, but those of us who have worked for years on her behalf know that the state began killing her a long time ago. Though she was convicted of murder, she was executed because of who she was — a mentally impaired, African-American, impoverished lesbian. No reasonable person can review Wanda Jean's trial transcripts and not realize that multiple biases, including anti-gay stereotypes, determined her sentence.

As an Oklahoman and an American, I am deeply saddened by Wanda Jean Allen's execution. As a longtime LGBT rights activist who serves on the board of PFLAG Oklahoma, I am chilled by this injustice. Wanda Jean Allen should have been punished for committing a crime. She should not have been killed in part because of her sexual orientation.

The death penalty is not a "gay issue" only when lesbians or gay men are executed. Our criminal justice system is incapable of administering capital punishment equally, which gives members of every despised minority good reason to fear it and oppose it vigorously.

Today, as we grieve Wanda Jean Allen, we look for meaning in her life and her death. And we call on all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Americans to actively support an end to capital punishment...

It's not enough to mourn the dead. We must fight for the living.

Remembrances

Teddy 'Jah' Heath

Political Prisoner. Teddy 'Jah' Heath died January 21 at Cocksackie Prison in New York State. The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, which has been consistent and effective in working for support and release of political prisoners in NY State, is gathering funds to help Jah's family pay for the funeral and memorial. If you are able to contribute please send checks, made out to Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, to Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, 1195 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11216, tel: 718-622-8292.

Herman Liveright

Herman Liveright, whose career of social activism took him from the Communist Party to defiance of Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist hearings to the streets of Havana, died in Corpus Christi in December. He was 89.

Virginia Pollard

Marilyn Buck's mother, Virginia Grace Pollard died on January 15 following a long illness. At Marilyn's request, donations can be made in memory of Virginia Grace Pollard to: 1) Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), P.B. 226, 916 W. Arrow Highway, San Dimas CA 91773. 2) Jericho Amnesty Movement, P.O. Box 3585, Oakland, CA 94609 (Bay Area chapter); or Jericho National Organizing Committee, P.O. Box 650, New York, NY 10009 (National Office) 3) Organizations doing Mumia work.



Wanda visited by Jesse Jackson.

The USA is fast approaching its 700th execution since resuming executions in 1977, more than half of which have occurred in the past five years alone, according to Amnesty International... Outgoing President Bill Clinton utterly failed to take any meaningful stand against violations of US obligations relating to the death penalty occurring at state level... Amnesty International.